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## Message to the Congress Transmitting the Health Care Liability Reform and Quality of Care Improvement Act of 1991

May 15, 1991

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I am pleased to submit for your consideration and enactment the "Health Care Liability Reform and Quality of Care Improvement Act of 1991."

This legislative proposal would assist in stemming the rising costs of health care caused by medical professional liability. During recent years, the costs of defensive medical practice and of litigation related to health care disputes have skyrocketed. As a result, the access to quality care for significant portions of the population has been threatened.

The bill would encourage States to adopt within 3 years quality assurance measures, tort reforms, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. A pool of funds would be available to States and hospitals in those States that implement these reforms. The quality assurance measures require effective

actions to improve quality and reduce the incidence of negligence. The tort reforms would include: (1) a reasonable cap on non-economic damages; (2) the elimination of joint and several liability for those damages; (3) prohibiting double recoveries by plaintiffs; and (4) permitting health care providers to pay damages for future costs periodically rather than in a lump sum. Most of these provisions would be made specifically applicable to actions arising under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

I urge the prompt and favorable consideration of this proposal, which would complement initiatives the Administration will undertake concerned with malpractice and quality of care.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,  
May 15, 1991.

## Remarks on the Administration's Domestic Agenda

May 15, 1991

Let me just say a few words. And I, first of all, thank you—thank the leader, Bob Dole, and Don Nickles and everybody for this hospitality. We've got a big and good domestic agenda. I just was up here to get your views, but to urge your support for Fast Track, which is overseas, but it's also domestic because I am convinced that it can create jobs in this country, and I think it's going to be good for the economy of the United States.

I was talking to Senator Thurmond about the crime bill. I am very interested in getting a comprehensive crime package through, and I hope that, with your help, we can do it. I realize the odds are a little

difficult, but we want to get that done.

I wanted to mention the veto strategy that Bob Dole and Al Simpson and so many of you have been active in. And it is very important because when we're in a minority, the only way we're going to get something done is to beat down the bad idea before they give us a shot at a good idea. Last year, we were very successful, thanks to the work of everybody around this table. And I just would urge your continued cooperation with the leadership.

Sometimes I know it's easy. Sometimes you can't join us, but for the most part, we've been very good about it, and I just urge your strong support for this veto strat-